

A 1608/1447.

S E R M O N, X

P R E A C H E D A T

St Nicholas's Church,

I N

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,

DECEMBER 18. 1745.

B E I N G T H E

P U B L I C K F A S T - D A Y,

Appointed by his M A J E S T Y.

B Y T H E R E V E R E N D

Mr T H O M A S T U R N O R, A. M.

V I C A R of *Newcastle upon Tyne.*

Published at the Request of the CORPORATION.

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To the RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

The MAYOR,
ALDERMEN,
AND
COMMON-COUNCIL,
OF
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

GENTLEMEN,

IF I should say, that the obliging Manner of your requesting me to send this Sermon, such as it is; into the World, does not afford me some Complacency, I should offend against Truth.

Not that either my Temper, or Abilities, dispose me to publick Appearance: But your candid Acceptance of my Services encourages me to hope, that my Ministry may not be altogether unsuccessful in this large and populous Town. And a greater Satisfaction, I think, cannot, on this Side the Grave, fill the Breast of a Christian Pastor; especially at a Time, when our Religion, as professed and established in Purity, is, together

gether with its sacred Head and Defender, not only malign'd and undermin'd, but resolutely and contemptuously invaded by the fierce Sons of Violence.

That our own Town has not suffered, otherwise than by its Interest in the Losses and Miseries of others, and a generous Fellow-feeling, when its Opulence, Influence, and Dignity, conspir'd to tempt and invite the Enemy towards it, under God, is owing, if not to the Infatuation of our Adversaries, to the Vigilance, Zeal, and early Resolutions, which appeared so seasonably within these Walls: And since the late Cloud has not burst directly over our Head, henceforward all Cause of Fear, on this, or any such-like Occasion, in our Days at least, if not to remotest Time, will, I trust, with the same propitious Providence, and our own Unanimity, be sufficiently banished by our numerous Army, (whose Health and Accommodation has been so carefully consulted) under the animating Command of His Majesty Himself, or His Heroick Son, the Delight and Darling of the People, the high Honour of whose Presence, within these our Limits, we please ourselves with expecting, if the Publick Welfare shall allow him to indulge us so great a Favour: However, let Posterity profit itself by every Circumstance, whether Prosperous or Adverse, of all preceeding Generations.

And let the present Age, as Duty requires, see the Hand, and own the guardian Care of Heaven in its repeated Preservation and Protection of the Royal Blood; always foremost in the Place of Danger, and the Scene of Action: For which Cause, I cannot but rejoice to hear, and congratulate others, that our anxious Fears for a precious Life are, in some Degree, abated, by the prudent Submission of a Remainder of our Foes; who have already given the Nation more than abundant Trouble.-----But I forbear to aggravate the Crimes of the Guilty.

So may our Youthful and Intrepid Warrior put to Flight, and triumph over, all his Father's and his Country's Enemies.

And now, Gentlemen, to my Respectful Thanks for the many Civilities and Obligations for which I stand indebted to yourselves and the rest of the Inhabitants of this Corporation, permit me to add my sincere Wishes and Prayers, for the Continuance and Increase of all Happiness to Them and You, both in your Publick and Private Capacities; and to declare, that in all good Offices, I am,

Your obedient, and

Very humble Servant,

THO. TURNOR.





A

S E R M O N, &c.

St MATT. vi. 16.

*Moreover, when ye fast, be not as
the Hypocrites.*



O reconcile ourselves unto GOD, and to implore, first the Forgiveness, and then the Favour of Heaven, is the Intention of every Act of Humiliation, whether Personal or National.

That GOD is always ready, upon the unfeigned Repentance of his Creatures, to pass an Act of total Oblivion and Indemnity, is the holy Comfort and happy Privilege of a corrupted Nature, founded on the gracious Promise of Truth itself, declaring, that *I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and their Iniquities I will remember no more.* This his Promise, he who is faithful, and cannot deviate from his own essential Perfections, will no doubt ever perform. The Danger and Difficulty lies within ourselves, in not preparing and qualifying ourselves for His Mercy, who is mighty to save, as well as to destroy.

Our Duty therefore it is, with lowest Prostration,

to supplicate the Mercy, and deprecate the Vengeance of the Sovereign of the whole World, that he may be watchful over us for Good, and not for Evil.

To this Purpose are we now assembled, by the pious Command of Authority: And as by Sincerity we answer, or by Hypocrisy frustrate the Design of this Solemnity, we shall derive upon us a Blessing, or a Curse. To obtain the former, and to avert the latter, by a just Discharge of our present Employment, let us observe what special Acts are suitable to, and constitute this Day of publick Contrition.

Now, because each Individual best knows, and is accountable for his own Crimes, by which he contributes his sad Proportion to the publick Stock, aggravating and accumulating the common Load of Guilt, and thereby inflaming the Wrath of God, it is fit that we arraign ourselves first, and confess the Depravity of our own Hearts; that by impartial, or rather distinguished, Severity on ourselves, we, being converted and reformed, may more effectually promote and confirm the Amendment of others: For what Change can be wrought in the Community, but as the several Parts, which form the Whole, do, every one for himself, concur to produce it? Conscious of the Malignity of his own Breast, into which none but the Eye of Omniscience can penetrate, though our external Actions may expose us to the Censure, or bespeak the Candour of our Fellow-creatures, every particular Man may, and must, in Times of Danger and Trouble more especially, approach the Throne of Grace, and appease the incensed Deity, by his own personal Confession and Confusion of Face; or in vain will the collective Body expect God's propitious Aspect, and the Light of his Countenance. But, forasmuch as an explicate Enumeration and Acknowledgement of our own peculiar



culiar Offences is neither proper nor practicable in the *Offices* calculated and framed for publick and joint Service, which are therefore composed in general Terms, that all may unite with a ready Harmony, and will not admit Diversity, or Singularity of Cases, it will be requisite to appropriate some Portion of Time, previous and subsequent to our publick Concourse, to pour forth our Souls in penitential Privacy; to recount our numerous Crimes, which, if heinous and wilful, and truly repented of, will be sure to occur, and stare us in the Face; or, in the Language of the Royal Psalmist, himself a deep Penitent, *to be ever before us*; to lament and detest the former, and to renounce the future Commission of them; to delineate them in their full Dimensions, by all the heightening Circumstances of Obstinacy and Ingratitude, with which we offended against greater Light, Advantages and Obligations; and, with full Abhorrence, to solicit the Remission of them for His Sake, who *came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*: To which we must add, as indeed it naturally follows, a firm and inviolable Purpose of conquering, or controuling at least, every Imagination that *exalteth itself above all that is called God*: But chiefly must we ruminate on the Sin that does so easily beset us; to which, by inward Disposition, or outward Temptation, we have fallen, and perhaps may again fall (such is Infirmary, and the Frailty of Resolution) a frequent Sacrifice.

Thus far advanced, to the Support of our feeble and fickle Resolves, we should call in the Assistance of powerful Contemplation on the Turpitude, the Danger, and the final Issue of Sin; on the Honour, the Safety, and the glorious Rewards of Virtue; and, by holy Vows, modest and full of Jealousy, not sanguine, ensnaring, and presumptuous, engage ourselves to ourselves, by a wise Circumspection, never

to repeat what the Mind has so earnestly and pathetically repented of; which to perform, with all the Fervour of Affection, which a Sense of our own Impotence, and the Riches of GOD's Mercy can inspire, we must invoke that Grace, which is able to subdue all Things to itself.

Such a Conduct and Behaviour will, in no small Degree, answer and secure the Design of this our solemn and occasional Meeting, and sanctify the Act; whereas a cool Acquiescence, or Concurrence, in the common Compunction, to which we subscribe only in concert with others, creates no lasting or lively Influence; has its chief Existence in the Head, and scarce reaches the Heart at all. Some faint Impressions may possibly be made; but, languid and shallow as they are, they are soon effaced. If we hate to be reformed, and retain a latent Attachment to the Error of our Ways, can our Prayers obtain any Audience from Him, who searcheth the very Heart and Reins? The external, ceremonial Observation of any ritual and religious Injunction, may acquit us, indeed, from the Guilt of scandalous Prophaneness, and an open Violation and Contempt of any Institution, but can never enroll us in the Number of those, who, in the Discharge of every Precept, *do it heartily as unto the Lord*. Hence the Inefficacy and Rejection of the *Jewish* Performances; which were superficial only, and not levelled at the Root of Sin: Notwithstanding their outward Dejection and mournful Deportment, their Heart remained unaltered, and their Appetite for their Vices was as keen as ever. It is the Testimony GOD himself has given of them; *I hearkened, says he, and heard, but they spake not aright; no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? But they turned every one to his Course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.*

Wherein consisted the Defect of their Carriage?
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Manifestly in this: Their Minds continued under the same former Obduration: No Self-examination, lest they should awaken their Consciences, and disturb their Peace; but, without Check or Controul, regardless of the Peril, or the Consequence, they universally practised the same Transgressions, and enhanced their Provocations. Probably, if not unquestionably, all concurred, without Scruple or Reserve, to publish and bewail the deplorable Condition, and the enormous Guilt of a State immersed in Sin; because, all equally confessing themselves involved in the general Sentence, no Reproach could fasten itself on one more than another: But few, if any, had the Humility, Courage and Sincerity, to say, each within himself, *Thou art the Man*: The Result of which was, that, instead of pacifying or propitiating offended Justice, they increased the Measure of their Iniquities, and added this unto all their Sins, that what should have been a Means of their Conversion, strengthened their Continuance in Rebellion.

Having thus, in the first Place, a feeling Sense of our own manifold Unworthiness,----Charity, and the Love of Souls, as well as our own Interest in the Sins of others, which may bring down the promiscuous Judgments of God upon us in this World, require us seriously and tenderly to lay to Heart the Faults and Follies of others; in a distinguished Manner, the more flagrant Crimes of every Class and Station of Life, which call louder for Vengeance, and expose us to heavier Wrath: Not that we must dare to stigmatize any individual with deserved, much less with undeserved Reproach. This were to insult and triumph, where we mean to condole and deplore; and with the *Pharisee*, to confess, not our own, but other Mens Sins; contrary to that emphatick Advice, *Let him that is without Sin*, that is,
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vain enough to think himself without Sin, *cast the first Stone*, and insolently invade his Neighbour.

In the Spirit of Meekness therefore, and being grieved for the Misfortunes and Miscarriages of their Brethren, Persons in all Ages, eminent for their Piety, have proportionably bemoaned the determined and persevering Wickedness of their Fellow-Creatures; and in their retired Privacy have poured forth the Anguish of their Hearts. The Prophet *Jeremy*, anxious for the Welfare of his Countrymen, conjures their Amendment; and with holy Importunity intreats their Return to Duty. More than this he could not do. The Success of his Labour of Love depended on their own free Compliance. *But if ye will not return*, his last Resort and Resolution he tells them is, *my Soul shall weep in secret Places for your Pride; and mine Eye shall weep sore and run down with Tears, because the LORD'S Flock is carried away Captive*. Hence the mournful and melting Strains, with which he laments and describes the State of a People, miserably devoted to Ruin and Captivity. How was the righteous Soul of *Lot* distracted and tortured, with the shameless Conduct of those among whom he was constrained to dwell? Disturbed to see, and unable to reclaim their licentious Practice! Thus the Royal Psalmist was no careless and unmoved Spectator of the Sins which were transacted in his View, and surrounded him on every Side: Overwhelmed with Sorrow and Compassion, he cannot restrain himself, but Rivers of Tears run down his Eyes, for the violated Law of GOD. Horror terrifies and dismays him for the calamitous Condition of the Wicked, who forsake GOD'S Testimonies; and again, he is fix'd in silent Grief, because Men kept not thy Word, O Lord! *Daniel* also, whose Honour it is to be numbered with *Noah* and *Job*, as a celebrated Favourite and Servant of the most High, personates all Ranks
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and Distinctions of Men, and with due Remorse bewails their Demerit. *We have sinned, and have committed Iniquity, and have done wickedly, O Lord! Righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us Confusion of Face, as at this Day.* He grants no Exemption: *To our Kings, to our Princes, and to our Fathers, because we have sinned against Thee.* Ezra, abashed and over-powered, is ashamed, and blushes to lift up his Face to his GOD. *For our Iniquities, says he, are increased over our Heads, and our Trespases grown up unto the Heavens. Since the Days of our Fathers, we have been in a great Trespas unto this Day; and for our Iniquities have we, our Kings and our Priests, been delivered into the Hands of the Kings of the Lands.*

With equal Zeal should every Soul, inflamed with the Love of God and his Neighbour, confess, and with holy Concern and Regret, observe the fatal Predominancy of Wickedness, which spreads its baneful Influence too much in every Place. Instead of honouring GOD with our Lips, how many, whose Dignity should make us hope better Things, do in common with the meaner Vulgar, prophane his Name by familiar Oaths, or more direful Imprecations? How many riot in Excess, and glory in being mighty to drink strong Drink? How many ascend their Neighbour's Bed, and scarce fear the Shame of a Discovery? No wonder therefore, if a less complicated Crime, sufficient nevertheless to preclude its Votaries from eternal and celestial Happiness, pleads Prescription, and has its avowed Advocates. The Sin of Perjury, we are told, has of late increased to such a Degree of Notoriety, as to engage the Attention of the Legislature for an effectual Remedy against it; nor ought we to doubt its Progress, whenever customary Swearing is deemed an Ornament of Speech. Full therefore of a piercing Sense of our own great Provocations, and the im-

maculate Purity of the divine Majesty, who is a jealous God, and will not always strive with Man, we must, with holy and unwearied Vehemence, assuage his Wrath, and so wrestle with him, as not to suffer him to go from us, until he grant us the Request of our Lips; until he lay aside his whole Displeasure, and assume his former, unmerited, and ill-requited Mercy. How do the Ancient Servants of God, whose Names are transmitted to us with illustrious Praise, deprecate the fiery Indignation of the living God upon their Days of profess'd Humiliation? With what Success and Acceptance, if not defeated by the Obstinacy and Impenitence of incorrigible Sinners, the express Command of the Almighty for this their Practice does sufficiently declare.

The Trumpet is enjoined to give its Sound: All Orders of Men are summoned to appear with mutual Readiness and united Consent: But chiefly the Man of God, whose Duty it is to intercede, as for himself, so for the People also, has it in Charge to mourn in the Bitterness of his Soul, and with earnest Cogency to deprecate and deplore the Ignominy, the Misery, and Servility of Heathen Tyranny and Foreign Bondage: He is instructed to urge even the Honour of God himself in their Behalf, to dash the triumphant Insolence of their Adversaries. Wherefore should they upbraid us with the Desertion of our God, on whose special Presence or near Approach we were commanded ever to rely? and wherefore should they with derisive Scorn make their insulting Question, *Where is now their God?* To such Direction conformable was the Behaviour of Priest and People; but with what Sincerity and Integrity, the sacred History, in which their Defection after so many Deliverances stands so frequently recorded, does too amply inform us: However, from their foul and repeated Revolts, let us learn Constancy

stancy and unshaken Steadiness to our GOD and SAVIOUR.

It is true indeed in some Cases, GOD absolutely discourages all further Application in his Saints : But then the Decree is peremptory, and the Sentence absolute. Thus *Moses*, willing to place his Foot on the promised Land, solicits the divine Favour and Permission, but meets with this hasty Reply, *Speak no more to me of this Matter.* And in another Case we read, that neither the Prayers nor the Righteousness of *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, should avail further than to the Benefit and Rescue of themselves: In like manner, GOD forbids the Prophet *Jeremy* to interpose any more for the stubborn *Israelites* ; therefore, *pray not thou for this People, neither lift up Cry nor Prayer for them ; neither make Intercession to me, for I will not bear thee.*

But these special Exceptions argue the general Prevalence of the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man. With good Reason therefore, and in humble Confidence, that GOD will again be intreated, ought we to address his supreme Goodness, and with the utmost Ardour of Affection to implore his tender Mercy ; not for any inherent Excellency arrogated to ourselves, but for the Manifestation of his own ineffable and transcendent Perfections ; ascribing with all Humility every happy Success, not to our own Sword or to our own Arm, but to his Right-hand, and his Arm, and the Light of his Countenance, because he had a Favour unto us.

To these our Petitions in general, for the Pardon and Protection of Him who is our only Help, we must add our particular Prayers for our Sovereign ; that GOD would adorn him with every Grace and Christian Virtue ; that he would commission his Angel to encamp round about him, to shield and defend him from the secret Treachery of the Perfi-

dious, or the daring Attempts of open Hostility.

The former, as secret, Time and the Providence of GOD, which brings to light the hidden Things of Darkneſs, muſt diſcover. But ſurely a more audacious Attempt of determined Hoſtility than the preſent Rebellion can never engage our Attention, excite our Vigilance, and provoke our Indignation.

We have ſeen theſe Dominions, not only alarmed with Fears, and threatened with Invaſions, but theſe Menaces executed, and (with Grief and to our Reproach I ſay it) promoted by domeſtick Concurrency. We have ſeen one Part of the united Kingdom, as it were, ſnatched out of his Maſteſty's Hands, tho' for a Season only; with this mortifying Circumſtance, that at the ſame Time, in the only Conflict of Moment which has yet happened, our Troops were ſpeedily and wonderfully defeated, by what Fatality I know not. We have ſeen a neighbouring Barrier Town made an eaſy Prey to the ſame ſucceſsful Adverſary, penetrating of late into the very Heart of our Land; harraſſing our Armies, and oppreſſing our Country, by vexatious Trouble and grievous Exactions, as Caprice, Reſentment or Neceſſity, were pleaſed to dictate; and perhaps once bending their Courſe, and advancing their haſty Steps, even to the Metropolis itſelf, tho' happily prevented by the prudent Vigilance and unwearied Labour of our Princely Commander, whoſe engaging Example, firſt Abroad, and now at Home, has ſo ſecured the Hearts and inſpired the Minds, as of the Nation in general, ſo eſpecially of the Military Part of it, as that nothing, we may reaſonably preſume, will be wanting to aſſiſt and forward him in the Rapidity of his Purſuit, and in his eager Intention of an ample Vengeance.

Not that I chuſe to decree a Triumph before the Conqueſt: Our Sins, for which we are now humbling ourſelves, bid us rather fear than preſume:
And

And the Uncertainty of Martial Events makes it Prudent at all Times for him that girdeth on the Harness, not to boast himself as he that putteth it off: But I speak the Warmth of my Affection, and the Language of Desire: For, till the offending and rebellious Rout lay down their Arms, and prostrate themselves before the Throne they have so notoriously insulted, I hope there is scarce an *English* Breast, (I would willingly say, I hope there are few *British* Breasts, compared with the Bulk of the People, those of Wealth and Dignity especially) which does not feel itself inflamed with Enmity implacable towards them.

What different Sentiments an early Submission may yet produce, it is not my Province to determine: That Judgment would be tempered with Mercy, we may, with Modesty, if not with Confidence, expect, from the Genius and Lenity of our Clime, exemplified by the reigning Family, almost to a Degree of Faultiness and Excess, as Experience, and the present ungrateful Returns of Perfidy, unhappily, and abundantly prove.

But still, no doubt, Justice will demand some Recompence for the Blood already spilt; for the Havock and Devastation spread, and so sensibly felt through many Places; and for the flagrant Indignity offered to our Sovereign; whose Martial Spirit and distinguished Behaviour, in the first Stage of Manhood, and in his more advanced Years, with his present fix'd Resolution, to defend the Sceptre with the Sword to his latest Breath, argue a Mind sensible of Injury, and jealous of his Honour.

Nevertheless, from this, and every other Instance of the Frailty of earthly Greatness, his Royal Heart will, I trust, extract this Good at least, of which no human or infernal Malice can deprive him, (and a full Compensation it will prove for any temporal Evil, how pungent soever and afflictive) that he
will,

will, more and more, aspire after an eternal and unfading Crown of Glory, reserved in the Heavens; and, from the just and sharp Emotions of Anger, which to be sure he feels, from the Violation of his Right, and the Defiance of his Authority, that his Zeal will rise in equal Proportion, and perpetually burn with a pious, not persecuting, Flame, for the Honour and Service of Him, *by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice.*

However, while we remember him that sitteth on the Throne, we must not forget him that sitteth on the Dunghill: My Meaning is; to render this our Devotion acceptable, and to procure a Return to our Prayers, we must acquit ourselves with due Compassion and Relief to the Indigent and Distressed. To this godly Stratagem the Scripture refers us in a peculiar Manner, when under the Apprehension of impending Danger, in that solemn, but affectionate Advice, *to break off our Sins by Righteousness, and our Iniquities, by shewing Mercy to the Poor, if it may be a lengthening of our Tranquility:* As if it had been said, nothing can possibly interpose between you and Punishment, but speedy and effectual Repentance, manifest in its genuine Fruit, the Love and Service of our forlorn Neighbour.

This will not only procure us a small Reprieve, or Procrastination of our Sentence, but may obtain a full Pardon, and wholly conciliate our most worthy Judge eternal. He is always ready, till the Measure of our Sins is really full, and the Day of Vengeance can no longer tarry, to meet our first Approaches, and to divest himself, on our further Advances, of all his Resentment.

What Share this single Virtue of Charity may claim in procuring the Continuance of divine Goodness towards us, notwithstanding the heinous Provocations of Profaneness, Hypocrisy, Infidelity, and all its Train of Vices, we cannot take upon us
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peremptorily to ascertain. It were impious to assign it a slender Portion. In private and publick Exigency we have the Authority of GOD to plead its powerful Efficacy. Hear the Consolation promised to the liberal Man in the following Language, *He shall not be afraid in the evil Time; and in the Days of Dearth he shall be satisfied.* Whence the Son of *Sirach* ascribes more Strength to true Bounty and Munificence in the perilous Day, than to any other Helmet of Salvation: *It shall fight for thee against the Enemy, more than a mighty Shield and strong Spear.*

What remains, but that we dedicate ourselves henceforward to GOD and Goodness? The Time past it more than suffices to have spent in Unrighteousness; let us redeem the future, and walk with greater Vigilance; and when we go out against our Enemies, whether temporal or spiritual, foreign or domestick, let us go forth in the Strength of the LORD; let us put on the Armour of Righteousness, as the *Collect* for this Season of *Advent* reminds us to do, which can alone render us invulnerable against the King of Terrors: Then may we shelter ourselves under the Shadow of God's Wings, and appropriate to ourselves the animating Exhortation, once made to *Joshua*, *Thine Eyes hath seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two Kingdoms; so shall the Lord do unto all the Kingdoms whither thou passest; ye shall not fear them; for the Lord your God shall fight for you:* Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant, for the Sake of his Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Adoration, Power, Prayer, and Praise, henceforth and for evermore.

F I N I S.



